

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached “Replacement Sheets” of drawings include changes to Figures 6B–6E and 7A–7D. More specifically, the marking “b1” has been amended to “bl” in Figures 6B–6D and 7A–7D to more precisely match the terminology used in the specification. Additionally, reference numeral 60 of Figure 7A has been relocated in order to maintain proper margins. The attached “Replacement Sheets,” which includes Figures 6A–6E and 7A–7E, replace the original sheets including Figures 6A–6E and 7A–7E.

REMARKS

Claims 1–26 are now pending in the application. Applicants respectfully traverse and request reconsideration.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 9 and 11–12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Jouppi et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,204,859).

With regard to claim 9, Jouppi et al. fail to show, teach, or suggest determining an appearance value for the pixel based on stored fragment data, wherein at least one of the stored fragment data is dropped when the number of fragment data per pixel exceeds a threshold value, wherein dropping at least one of the stored fragment data further includes providing the dropped fragment data with a no color designation.

As best understood by Applicants, Jouppi et al. disclose a method and an apparatus that determines a color for pixels in a graphics system. Multiple fragments of an image may be visible in any given pixel. Each visible fragment has a fragment value that includes the color of that fragment. The color values for each fragment are maintained throughout the process. A predetermined number of the fragment values are stored for each pixel. When a new fragment is visible in the pixel, one of the fragment values is discarded. The remaining fragment values are subsequently used to generate the color of the pixel. The discarded fragment value may be the new fragment value or one of the stored fragment values. Various strategies can be used to determine which fragment value is discarded. One strategy discards the stored fragment value with the greatest Z-depth. Another strategy discards the stored fragment value that produces the smallest color difference from the new fragment value. A third strategy discards the new fragment value when one of the fragments is in front of the new fragment and the stored fragment value of that fragment produces the smallest color difference from the new fragment

value. Applicants can find no mention of providing the fragment value with a no color designation in the cited portions of Jouppi et al.

The Examiner cites Col. 15, lines 28–33 as teaching “wherein dropping at least one of the stored fragment data further includes providing the dropped fragment data with a no color designation.” However, this portion merely refers to an exception to the Z-depth strategy mentioned above. In this exception the graphics accelerator does not store the new fragment for comparison when it has an Alpha value of 0.0, since the new fragment is transparent. Applicants can find no mention of providing the dropped fragment data with a no color designation. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 9 is respectfully requested.

Claims 11–13 each depend on claim 9 are therefore allowable for at least similar reasons and are believed to be allowable for having novel and non-obvious subject matter.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1–3, 5, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0030642) in view of Jouppi et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,204,859).

With regard to claim 1, the Examiner admits that Chen et al. fail to show, teach, or suggest “wherein dropping the fragment data further includes assigning the fragment data to be dropped with a no color designation.”

Jouppi et al. fail to cure the deficient teachings of Chen et al. The Examiner cites Col. 15, lines 28–33 as teaching “wherein dropping the fragment data further includes assigning the fragment data to be dropped with a no color designation.” However, as previously discussed, this portion merely refers to an exception to the Z-depth strategy mentioned above. In this exception the graphics accelerator does not store the new fragment for comparison when it has an Alpha value of 0.0, since the new fragment is transparent. Applicants can find no mention of

assigning the dropped fragment data with a no color designation in the cited portions of Jouppi et al. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

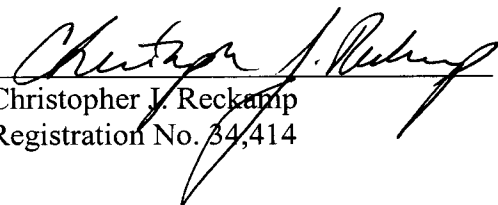
Claims 2–5, 7–8 each ultimately depend on claim 1 and are allowable for at least similar reasons and are believed to be allowable for having novel and non-obvious subject matter. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this response is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (312) 609-7500.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
Christopher J. Reckamp
Registration No. 34,414

Vedder, Price, Kaufman & Kammholz, P.C.
222 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2600
Chicago, Illinois 60601
phone: (312) 609-7599
fax: (312) 609-5005